PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY SWOT ANALYSIS

Personal Technology SWOT Analysis, Goals, and Plan

Rebecca Paxton Wall

University of West Georgia

**Educational Technology Philosophy**

Technology plays an important role in education. It enhances the curriculum by engaging students, which promotes mastery of academic standards. Technological proficiency is necessary if students are to become competitive in the global workplace. Technology can be beneficial to all learning styles. It facilitates student-centered learning and differentiated instruction, as well as the ability to provide immediate feedback to students. Classrooms that integrate technology encourage motivation, collaborative learning, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Strengths**

My personal technology strengths include my interest and desire to integrate technology into education, as well as my education and experience. I have a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and a Master of Business Education degree. I am currently pursuing a Specialist of Instructional Technology degree. I have also completed the GA TAPP Program, where I received my teaching certification in Special Education. During these programs, I learned several strategies for incorporating technology into instruction and discovered endless resources to engage students in learning.

Throughout my coursework, I became proficient in the Microsoft Office software suite. This proficiency has allowed me to be able to quickly and easily complete tasks, such as creating and updating classroom documents. While many teachers still use overhead projectors and whiteboards, I am able to design graphic organizers and produce Power Points efficiently. I create spreadsheets for my department to collect and organize data, as well as to use in the classroom.

I am very interested in online tools as well. I have taken two web design courses, which made me consider the potential of web use in the classroom. I created a curriculum web in one course, which I have already implemented this year in my Math I class. I am currently working on a new curriculum web for my study skills class. I am working with the other teacher to include content for core standards and personal, social, life, and study skills. I am also in the process of creating a website for my department, so that we have a central location for information that is always current and easy to update and disseminate.

Other personal strengths include time-management, my ability to multi-task, and my work ethic. I am able to make time to research and locate resources to incorporate into lessons, while completing my classroom duties and responsibilities. I able to simultaneously develop long term projects, such as curriculum webs. I am dedicated to increasing student engagement and achievement through the use of technology, even though it is not required by my school.

**Weaknesses**

My personal technology weaknesses are diagnosing networking and hardware issues. Beyond restarting the computer or checking the printer for paper, I have to put in a “help ticket” for solutions to my computer problems. I solve problems with sound systems and projectors by trial and error, not because I have any real knowledge. I have a broad understanding of computer connections, but limited troubleshooting abilities. I am also unfamiliar with the processes for updating the school’s computers, including reimaging and updating and loading software. I know some of it can be done remotely and other things must be done at each individual computer. Honestly, I am not very interested in these things either.

I also struggle to understand basic computer functioning. My brand new home computer keeps “crashing.” I do not know why and I have to call my brother when it does. He tries various things to fix it, most of which I have never seen done before. Troubleshooting with him will hopefully give me a better understanding of hardware, networking, and basic computer functions. I hope it will one day become one of my strengths, instead of a weakness.

Another weakness is my tolerance of and persistence with colleagues. I do not want to waste my time creating resources to use in co-taught classes, if the teacher is not open-minded and truly interested in the project. Many teachers want me to create lessons and materials simply so that they do not have to. Lab days end up becoming free days. The teachers do not take them seriously, so the students do not either. Recently, I have found myself focusing on the classes where the ideas are embraced and appreciated.

**Opportunities**

There are many opportunities for technology use within the school. It can be used to increase student achievement by engaging students and facilitating various learning styles. Our school works in Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs), where teachers plan instruction and compare data. This setting offers a great place for collaboration and idea sharing. There is also an increasing demand for its use. Federal and state technology standards exist because of the importance of technology education to prepare students for post-graduation goals.

Opportunity within my school exists for me because I am the only one pursuing this degree, and the only one working outside of the Business Education department with my background and education. I have the unique opportunity to incorporate technologies into the math curriculum, which is under high demand for increased achievement. I also have the opportunity to incorporate it into the other content areas through my study skills classes.

I have the opportunity to go back to school and pursue another degree. Many people are prohibited from doing so because of family obligations, lack of time to dedicate to it, and because of financial reasons. Personal opportunities will hopefully include the chance to work as a technology specialist within my district. I am also completing the distance education track in my program so I can receive a PSC endorsement. I hope to be able to work at a technical college one day.

**Threats**

The threats to my technology goals are the barriers to integration experienced in the school system. These barriers include lack of available technologies, such as response systems and interactive boards. Technology policies and procedures are a huge barrier as well. I have planned online activities, but experienced roadblocks in implementation because of firewalls and user privileges. I have designed curriculum webs, but do currently have no way to host them. Our district does not have hosting options for teachers, and web hosting sites are blocked by the school. The process to have a new technology purchased and implemented is very slow.

Other barriers include the constraints of time to plan and prepare lessons with technology, the resistance of peers, and the availability of resources. Student awareness is also a threat. There are still many students that are not familiar with computers and the internet, so instructional time has to be spent teaching them how to use the technology before they can complete their standards-based assignments.

Our school system does not have instructional technology specialists in the school. We have one for the entire county. Our school system does not place high importance on instructional technology, so teachers do not feel it is necessary to incorporate it. A personal threat for me is my desire to stay at my current school or in my district. If they do not have these positions, I will have to make a big change to accomplish my goals. Also, it will be difficult to make the transition out of Special Education. I have been teaching for five years as a Special Education, interrelated math teacher. I do not have experience in the business education classrooms. Even though I have the education required to do so, I do not have the classroom experience I believe will be needed to obtain one of these positions. I know there are always people with more experience than me. With the state of the current job market, opportunities are likely to be limited for auxiliary positions.

**Personal Technology Goals**

I have short-term and long-term personal technology goals. In the short-term, I would like to complete and fully implement a curriculum web into my study skills class. At the same time, I would like to frequently and consistently integrate technologies into at least one of my math classes this year. I would also like to increase awareness of ideas and resources to my peers, and encourage them to try integrating new technologies.

My long-term goals include working as a Technology Specialist and teaching business education at the local technical college. Within five years, I hope to leave the classroom and find a position as a technology specialist, where I can help teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. Within ten years, I would like to work at a technical college. The technical colleges have begun to offer blended learning courses that I am very interested in teaching.

**Personal Technology Plan**

I plan to finish my Specialist of Instructional Technology program in December, 2012 and obtain a PSC endorsement in distance education. I also plan to take the GACE for business education and technology education to become certified in these areas.

I plan to research new technologies and available resources, and adapt them to fit the curriculum in which I teach. I plan to use the feedback from students and colleagues, as well as my observations to revise my lessons and adapt them to the other courses. I plan to continue giving teachers demonstrations of ideas so they see the benefits of its use to students and themselves. I want them to see how it engages students, allows for student-centered learning, and provides for an ease of grading and facilitating lessons. I intend to gain the support of my administration as well.

I have been working with our media specialist and our technology technician to find solutions to the barriers I am encountering at my school. I have been working with my brother to gain a better understanding of hardware and networking, and plan to continue to do so. I also plan to contact the technology specialist at the county office to obtain more resources for the classroom.